

Message Text

SECRET

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

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DRAFTED BY NEA:ALATHERTON, JR:HE

APPROVED BY NEA:ALATHERTON, JR.

S/ -MR. ORTIZ

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSH TEL AVIV NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 217461

NODIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3M

TAGS: PFOR, IS, EG

SUBJECT: ISRAELI CARGO THROUGH SUEZ CANAL

FOR THE AMBASSADOR

GENEVA EYES ONLY FOR DEPUTY

ASST SECRETARY HAROLD SAUNDERS

1. ACTING ON SECRETARY'S INSTRUCTIONS, ASSISTANT SECRETARY
ATHERTON CALLED AMBASSADOR DINITZ SEPT. 11 TO PASS ALONG
FAHMY'S REACTION (BEING REPEATED TO YOU SEPTTEL) TO ISRAELI
PROPOSAL TO SEND NON-MILITARY CARGO THROUGH SUEZ CANAL
WITHIN NEXT FEW DAYS.

2. ATHERTON INFORMED DINITZ THAT WE HAD SOUNDED OUT
EGYPTIANS ON ISSUE. EILTS HAD MADE ELOQUENT PRESENTATION
OF CASE TO FAHMY BUT LATTER'S REACTION WAS LONG AND HEATED.
IT COULD BE BOILED DOWN TO ONE SENTENCE: TO SEND ISRAELI
CARGO THROUGH CANAL AT THIS POINT IN TIME WOULD CREATE
ADDITIONAL FUROR IN ARAB WORLD AND WOULD BE TANTAMOUNT TO
POLITICAL SUICIDE FOR SADAT. FAHMY ASKED THAT CARGO NOT
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BE SENT THROUGH AT THIS TIME.

3. ATHERTON WENT ON TO SAY THAT WE UNDERSTAND ISRAEL'S PROBLEM AND THAT IT WOULD HAVE TO BE RESOLVED. WE WILL CONTINUE TO WORK ON THIS PROBLEM. DINITZ RESPONDED THAT HE WOULD REPORT THIS TO GOI AND WOULD SUGGEST THAT IT CONSIDER NEXT POSSIBLE SHIP THAT COULD TRANSIT CANAL. DINITZ SAID IT WAS QUESTION OF MAKING NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS

IN TIME. IN ANY CASE, HE PROMISED TO INFORM ATHERTON OF WHEN NEXT POSSIBLE VOYAGE COULD TAKE PLACE.

4. ATHERTON NOTED THIS SUBJECT HAD BEEN KEPT OUT OF PUBLIC SPOTLIGHT AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT THIS WOULD CONTINUE TO BE CASE. DINITZ REPLIED THAT ISRAELI PRESS HAD REPORTED THAT ZIM LINES WAS LOOKING AT AVAILABILITY OF SHIPS TO TRANSIT CANAL. ATHERTON RESPONDED THAT IT WAS INEVITABLE THAT THIS ASPECT WOULD BE IN PRESS SINCE TRANSIT ISSUE HAD BEEN IN PUBLIC DOMAIN FOR SOME PERIOD OF TIME; WHAT WAS IMPORTANT TO KEEP FROM LEAKING OUT WAS QUESTION OF WHETHER EGYPT WAS DRAGGING ITS FEET.

5. DINITZ ENDED CONVERSATION BY SAYING HE HOPED FAHMY AND SADAT UNDERSTOOD THAT THIS PROBLEM WOULD HAVE TO BE RESOLVED BEFORE AGREEMENT PROTOCOL WAS SIGNED IN GENEVA WORKING GROUP. HE PROMISED TO RELAY GOI'S VIEWS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. KISSINGER

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